

Appendix Three

Feed-back received on our Draft Development Brief from the soft-market testing exercise:

General comments:

- We should really be seeking a regeneration partner for the whole area; and not just focus on the Spencer Yard development site area. Far better to have a bigger project area.
- Our contract with such private sector partner should be regeneration based (not just developer) based.
- We need to create an 'anchor space' within the new quarter, to be the main focal point, possibly with multi-uses.
- Lots of small interventions, and not just say just one major scheme, in the area were suggested. These could be by the regeneration partner working directly with existing private property owners; and potentially without the need for the Council's direct involvement, or the need to purchase certain properties. Solutions should be outcome based, and not always be predicated on property purchases.
- This is a very niche opportunity. It would be difficult for the majority of developers in the market. This will not be a simple project, but very complex. It will require ongoing commitment by both the chosen developer partner, and the Council.
- Occupier demand for the broad spread of creative uses will be there.
- Create something with style!
- Direct access to the Spencer Yard via the waterside colonnade should be a key ambition. Also, potential to create a new river bank walk along this stretch of the River Leam.
- Huge food potential, based on Leamington's very successful Food Festival and general food offer and reputation.
- Make any scheme focussed on families and not just students.
- The Loft Theatre is still a key player in any regeneration proposals and solutions. They should be involved from the outset.
- Clear demand for affluent living in Leamington at present. High residential values.
- Many developers are competing for any residential development opportunities in the town centre, which is driving up values.
- A mixed-use new quarter would be a major new attraction for the town.
- Offices here wouldn't work without car parking.
- Concerns that 'creative' means low-rent. Impact on viability. A mix of all types of creative businesses is therefore being required for viability.
- Spencer Street frontage is very important.
- Forward funding and resourcing such a large scale ambition will be challenging, on the basis that the eventual returns will be some years away. This could put off smaller developers. Consequently we need to ensure that there are quick wins in say Spencer yard with the URC to resolve this risk.

Pump Rooms:

- It will be crucial to create a scale of any new quarter.... Better to have more space, rather than less.
- The present Pump Rooms could provide a much better front door to any scheme. The present building/facility and offer is "not exiting". There is huge potential to use the concourse and other frontage spaces in a much more effective way. There is potential to extend the building by way of conservatory type structures; onto the Pump Rooms Gardens at the front, and onto the Riverside art the rear. This could greatly compliment the Royal Pump Rooms Gardens improvement project.

External funding sources:

- Securing external grant (or similar) funding will be crucial for any Creative Quarter project. Without it schemes just wouldn't stack-up financially.
- Real potential for Heritage Lottery funding. Encouraging and enabling the public (in substantial numbers) into and around any scheme will be crucial to un-locking any such funding.
- Seeking the support of the Local Enterprise Partnership will be crucial. Creating better connectivity to the town centre, and new business start-ups will be central to achieving this.

Land assembly:

- The threat of the Council seeking back-up Compulsory Purchase Powers (where necessary) will be essential to see any programme of development through to a successful conclusion.

Car parking:

- Lack of off-street parking in the area will have to be accepted. The solutions will be mainly on-street based.

Scheme management:

- A 'heavy' management team approach is probably not required for any new Quarter. Better and more effective to be tenant led.

Programme:

- Any development programme will be medium to long-term. Consequently, and an initial 5-7 year initial agreement with WDC for any scheme was suggested.